

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-11 ISO-00 IO-14 SAJ-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 EB-11

COME-00 TRSE-00 INT-08 FEA-02 CIEP-02 AID-20 OC-06

DRC-01 /191 W

----- 003539

R 121410Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5250

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, MT, EG, KU, BA, SA

SUBJ: MINTOFF STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST TOUR

REF: VALLETTA 0267

1. SUMMARY: IN MUCH AWAITED PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT (FEB 11) ON HIS MIDDLE EAST TOUR, MINTOFF COULD ONLY SAY THAT SAUDI ARABIA, BAHRAIN, AND KUWAIT HAD PROMISED TO DISCUSS MALTA'S NEED FOR CHEAPER CRUDE OIL WITH OTHER ARAB PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES AT THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY. ACCORDING TO CONFLICTING LOCAL PRESS REPORTS, MINTOFF MENTIONED ARAB OIL EMBARGO AGAINST U.S. ONE
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REPORT SAYS HE HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT EMBARGO WAS

COMING TO AN END, BUT OTHER HAVE HIM SAYING THAT CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY THAT EMBARGO WOULD BE LIFTED. WE CHECKED WITH MINTOFF'S PRIVATE SECRETARY JOE COMILLERI, WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM ON HIS TRIP WHO TOLD US THAT ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT HAVE FULL TEXT OF P.P.M.'S STATEMENT, HE SHOULD HAVE SAID THAT "THE EMBARGO MAY COME TO AN END VERY SOON." CAMILLERI STRESSED THE "MAY." HE DID NOT REVEAL SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION.

2. MINTOFF'S STATEMENT LARGELY COVERED HIS ITINERARY AND NAMES OF OFFICIALS AND DIGNITARIES WITH WHOM HE MET WHICH HAVE BEEN REPORTED PREVIOUSLY.

3. IN ROME, MINTOFF SAID HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH PTT MINISTER TOGNI CONCERNED THE INSTALLATION OF TWO EXCHANGES TO IMPROVE MALTA'S TELEX AND TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS. WITH RUMOR, HE DISCUSSED "LATEST INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND PENDING BILATERAL MATTERS."

4. IN CAIRO HE HAD BEEN TOLD OF PLANS FOR THE REOPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL TO SHIPPING "IN NOT LESS THAN SIX MONTHS TIME."

5. IN KUWAIT THE MALTESE DELEGATION HAD SUBMITTED DETAILED PLANS FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE DELEGATION HAD BEEN TOLD THAT OPEC MEMBERS ARE BOUND NOT TO SELL CRUDE "BELOW THE FIXED PRICE."

6. DURING BRIEF VISIT TO BAHRAIN, MINTOFF SAID THAT DELEGATION MET WITH P.M. KHALID KHALIFA AND AMIR ISALHALIFA AND DISCUSSED NEED TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION.

7. IN SAUDI ARABIA, THE SAME TOPIC WAS DISCUSSED AS WELL AS THE POSSIBILITY OF JOINT INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS IN MALTA.

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8. ON HIS RETURN STOP IN ROME, MINTOFF SAID HE HAD MET WITH FONMIN MORO AND DISCUSSED EUROPEAN RELATIONS WITH MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES.

9. MINTOFF CAREFULLY AVOIDED DIRECT REPLIES TO OPPOSITIN QUESTIONS FOLLOWING HIS STATEMENT, SIMPLY SAYING THAT NOTHING SHOULD BE RULED OUT (I.E. ARAB ASSISTANCE), AND ONE SHOULDN'T COUNT CHICKENS BEFORE

THEY'RE HATCHED.

10. COMMENT: MINTOFF'S FAILURE TO RETURN WITH ANYTHING MORE THAN
A VAGUE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING CHEAPER OIL AT SOME
UNSPECIFIED FUTURE DATE CERTAINLY WAS DISAPPOINTING, NOT
ONLY TO HIS SUPPORTERS BUT ALSO TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC
AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.GETZ

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Draft Date: 12 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
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